



Maricopa County Animal Care & Control Fact Sheet



CANINE PARVOVIRUS

What is the Canine Parvovirus?

Canine Parvovirus is a highly contagious viral disease found in dogs. It first appeared in the late 1970's, and is now the most common serious dog disease seen in the United States. It has been reported in coyotes, foxes and wolves, as well as dogs, and is thought to affect all members of the canine family. Puppies are the most likely to become ill from the disease. Also, German Shepherds, Labrador Retrievers, Dobermans and Pit Bulls seem to be at higher risk.

How is it Transmitted?

Parvovirus is spread through "fecal-oral" contamination. This means a healthy but unprotected dog or puppy comes into contact with the stool of a dog who is shedding the disease. Dogs can shed the virus in their stool before they are ever clinically ill and for two weeks following recovery.

What are the Symptoms?

Parvovirus most often affects the gastro-intestinal system of the dog. Symptoms begin with a general malaise; the dog will not be his/herself. He or she will not want to eat or drink. Once the disease is in full swing the dog will not be able to keep anything down and have diarrhea, often very bloody. Death is likely without veterinary intervention due to severe dehydration and damage to the intestinal tract.

How is Diagnosed?

A veterinarian can diagnose Parvovirus in the clinic by the use of a simple ELISA test that requires nothing more than a small sample of feces. There are cases of false negative results due to low levels of virus in the stool so it may be necessary to send a blood sample to the lab to look for a reduction in white blood cells – another indicator of the disease.

How is it treated?

Although generally expensive to treat, most puppies that receive proper treatment can survive with no ill after-effects. The treatment includes fluid therapy, medications to stop vomiting, hospitalization in most cases, antibiotic injections and sometimes blood transfusions.

How can I Prevent it?

Puppies should be vaccinated for Parvovirus beginning at six weeks of age. That vaccination should be repeated every three to four weeks until the puppy is 16 weeks of age. The vaccination should be boosted one year from the final puppy vaccination and then as directed by your veterinarian. AC&C offers vaccines to the public for \$10 at all three of our animal care centers.

Roundworms and other parasites can increase the likelihood and severity of infection. Have a stool sample checked for parasites at the time of adoption, six months later and once yearly for the remainder of your dog's life.

Keep your puppy at home until he or she is fully vaccinated. Do not permit your puppy to interact with dogs whose vaccination status is unknown.

If your dog is diagnosed with Parvovirus, clean all surfaces with bleach and water. Dilute the bleach to a 1:32 dilution (one part bleach to 32 parts water). The bleach solution must remain on any surface for a minimum of 10 minutes to be effective. Bleach may not be used on fabric surfaces. The disease is very stable in the environment and can persist in the ground and other organic materials for over one year. Do not adopt a puppy if you have had Parvovirus in your home for a minimum of six months unless you are adopting a fully vaccinated dog.

For more information on animal care, behavior or AC&C programs, contact (602) 506-PETS or visit pets.maricopa.